

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (original) A conveying apparatus for guiding a rod-like ceramic molding, continuously extruded from a mold and extending from the mold while not yet cut, to a cutter for cutting the rod-like ceramic molding into ceramic blocks, each having a predetermined length, wherein

the conveying apparatus has pads, each having a placement surface for placing the rod-like ceramic molding while being in contact with the outer circumference of the rod-like ceramic molding, and the placement surface of the pad has an axial length shorter than a half of an axial length of the ceramic block to be cut by the cutter, and a portion of the rod-like ceramic molding to be cut off as the ceramic block is held and conveyed by two or more of the pads.

2. (original) A conveying apparatus for guiding a ceramic molding as defined by claim 1, wherein the ceramic block is capable of providing two or more of final ceramic molding.

3. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus for guiding a ceramic molding as defined by claim 1, wherein the pad on which the rod-like ceramic molding is placed is adapted to advance in the extruding direction at a speed generally equal to the extrusion-molding speed of the rod-like ceramic molding.

4. (original) A conveying apparatus for guiding a ceramic molding as defined by claim 1, wherein the portion to be cut off is held by the same number of pads as the final moldings cut off from the ceramic block.

5. (original) A conveying apparatus for guiding a ceramic molding as defined by claim 1, wherein at least the placement surface of the pad is formed of low resilience material easily deformable in conformity with the contour of the rod-like ceramic molding when being in contact with the latter.

6. (currently amended) A conveying apparatus for guiding a ceramic molding as defined by claim 5, wherein the low resilience material is a foamed material selected from a group of urethane, melamine, ~~Teflon~~ fluorine-type resin and silicon.

7. (original) A conveying apparatus for guiding a ceramic molding as defined by claim 1, wherein the placement surface has a cross-section taken along a plane vertical to the axial direction is in conformity with a cross-section of the rod-like ceramic molding taken along a plane vertical to the axial direction.

8. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus for guiding a ceramic molding as defined by claim 1, wherein the placement surface of each said pad is generally part cylindrical.

9. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus for guiding a ceramic molding as defined by claim 1, wherein the conveying apparatus comprises a rotary roller and a belt adapted to be advanced by the rotary roller, and the pads are bonded to a conveyor surface of the belt for conveying the rod-like ceramic molding.

10. (previously presented) An apparatus for producing a ceramic molding comprising:

- an extrusion-molding device for extrusion-molding a rod-like ceramic molding;
- a cutter for cutting the rod-like ceramic molding into ceramic blocks, each having a predetermined axial length; and
- a conveying apparatus for conveying the rod-like ceramic molding to the cutter,

wherein the conveying apparatus has pads, each having a placement surface for placing the rod-ceramic molding while being in contact with the outer circumference of the rod-like ceramic molding;

the placement surface of the pad has an axial length shorter than half said predetermined length of the ceramic block, and

each portion of the rod-like ceramic molding to be cutoff by the cutter as a ceramic block is held and conveyed by two or more of said pads.

11. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus as in claim 10, further comprising a drying device for drying ceramic blocks cut by said cutter and wherein said conveying apparatus for conveying the rod-like ceramic molding to the cutter further conveys the cut ceramic blocks from the cutter to the drying device.

12. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus as in claim 10, wherein the pads on which the rod-like ceramic molding is placed are adapted to advance in the extruding direction at a speed generally equal to the extrusion-molding speed of the rod-like ceramic molding.

13. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus as in claim 10, wherein at least the placement surface of the pad is formed of low resilience material easily deformable in conformity with the contour of the rod-like ceramic molding when in contact therewith.

14. (currently amended) A conveying apparatus as in claim 13, wherein the low resilience material is a foamed material selected from the group consisting of urethane, melamine, ~~Teflon~~ fluorine-type resin and silicon.

15. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus as in claim 10, wherein the placement surface has a cross-section taken along a plane vertical to the axial direction

is in conformity with a cross-section of the rod-like ceramic molding taken along a plane vertical to the axial direction.

16. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus as in claim 10, wherein the extrusion-molding device is constructed and arranged to extrusion mold a honeycomb structure having cells formed so that cell walls are arranged in a honeycomb manner.

17. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus as in claim 10, wherein the placement surface of each said pad is generally part cylindrical.

18. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus as in claim 10, wherein the conveying apparatus comprises a rotary roller and a belt adapted to be advanced by the rotary roller, and the pads are bonded to a conveyor surface of the belt for conveying the rod-like ceramic molding.

19. (previously presented) A conveying apparatus as in claim 10, wherein said cutter has a cutter wire selectively moved to cut the rod-like ceramic molding to define said blocks.